

Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 NEA-10 IO-13 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00
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FM AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4545
INFO AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY MOGAISCIO
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY NAIROBI
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY ROME
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

C O N F I D E N T I A L ADDIS ABABA 3840

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: ASEC, MOPS, PINS, PINT, ET
SUBJ: OVERVIEW OF PROVINCES II - CENTRAL

REF: A. ADDIS ABABA 0163 (NOTAL), B. ADDIS ABABA 1372 (NOTAL),
C. ADDIS ABABA 3385 (NOTAL), D. ADDIS ABABA 3567 (NOTAL)

1. REF (A) SUMMARIZED DISTURBANCES AND DISSIDENCE IN
COUNTRYSIDE AS OF JANUARY 1977. THIS SECOND OF FOUR-PART
CABLE REPORTING PROVINCIAL DEVELOPMENTS JANUARY THROUGH
JUNE 1977.

A. WOLLO - EPMG COUNTER-INSURGENCY OPERATIONS IN COUN-
TRYDISE WEST OF MAIN NORTH-SOUTH ROAD IN FEBRUARY AND MARCH
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APPARENTLY SUCCESSFUL, WIT DISSIDENCE IN AREA NOW CONFINED
TO OCCASIONAL HIT-AND-RUN FORAYS AND OCCASIONAL AS-
SASSINATIONS IN MAJOR TOWNS. PROVINCIAL PUBLIC SAFETY
CHIEF ASSASSINATED IN DESSIE (PROVINCIAL CAPITAL)
MARCH 5, HEAD OF DESSIE ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH ASSASSI-
NATED MAY 6, AND FOUR "COMRADES" SLAIN IN DESSIE MAY
26. RELIABLE SOURCE REPORTED ESTABLISHMENT OF MILI-

TIA TRAINING CAMP IN EARLY FEBRUARY FOR NEARLY 500 ADALS (TRADITIONALLY FIERCE DANAKIL ETHNIC GROUP), 75 KMS EAST OF MAIN ROAD. SOURCE ALSO CLAIMED MARAUDING ISSAS ATTACKED CAMP IN APRIL WITH RESULTING ADAL FATALITIES. WHILE TRANSPORT ALONG ASSAB ROAD IN EASTERN WOLLO STILL OBLIGED TO TRAVEL IN ESCORTED CONVOY, THERE HAS BEEN NO MAJOR DISRUPTION OF ROAD PST SIX MONTHS. AFAR LIBERATION FRONT (ALF) HAS BEEN UNABLE OR UNWILLING TO INTERDICT ROAD DURING REPORTING PERIOD. SINCE RECENT CLOSURE OF ADDIS-DJIBOUTI RAILROAD, ASSAB ROAD SOLE UNINTERRUPTED LINK TO SEA, A SITUATION WHICH MAY BE DIFFICULT FOR ERITREANS, SOMALI INSURGENTS, AND OTHER ANTI-EPMG GROUPS TO IGNORE. EPMG INCREASED LEVEL OF ITS OPERATIONS AGAINST EDU STRONGHOLDS IN SOUTHEAST OF PROVINCE IN MAY AND JUNE, WITH SOME APPARENT SUCCESS. (REF D) REPORTED ARRESTS OF FORMER PROVINCIAL OFFICIALS UNDER HAILE SELASSIE AND KILLING OF SEVEN EDU SUPPORTERS. JUNE 16 AMHARIC PRESS REPORTED LIQUIDATION OF 26 EDU INSURGENTS IN SAME AREA.) STUDENTS IN DESSIE CONTINUED TO CAUSE MINOR IRRITATION TO EPMG, THROUGH TRUCULENCE AND GENERALIZED OPPOSITION TO CENTRAL GOVERNMENT (SOME CLAIMING EPRP MEMBERSHIP). HOWEVER, AUTHORITY EXERCISED OVER SCHOOLS THROUGH LOCAL SUPERVISORY COMMITTEES AND KEBELES HAS BEEN ADEQUATE TO LIMIT STUDENT PROBLEMS TO EASILY MANAGEABLE LEVEL. IN MAY, TWO US MISSIONARIES WERE UNDER HOUSE ARREST
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FOR TWO WEEKS JUST OUTSIDE DESSIE, BUT WERE SUBSEQUENTLY RELEASED AND RETURNED TO ADDIS ABABA. MAIN NORTH-SOUTH ROAD HAS BEEN SAFE AND TRAFFIC HAS MOVED ALONG IT NORMALLY.

B. GOJJAM - PROVINCE CONTINUES REMARKABLY FREE OF ANY SIGNIFICANT INSURGENT ACTIVITY. FORMERLY NOTORIOUS GOJJAMI "SHIFTAS" (OUTLAWS) STILL INACTIVE. HARVEST FROM PAST YEAR HAS BEEN EXCELLENT, WITH PROVINCE'S SURPLUS MAJOR SOURCE OF ADDIS GRAIN SUPPLY. PEASANT ASSOCIATIONS CONSEQUENTLY APPEAR TO BE PROSPERING. SCHOOL SITUATION REMAINS QUIESCENT. BAHR DAR TEXTILE FACTORY WORKING AT FULL CAPACITY, WITH FORMER LABOR PROBLEMS APPARENTLY RESOLVED. SEARCH CAMPAIGNS HAVE BEEN CONDUCTED IN MAY AND JUNE IN DEBRE KARKOS (PROVINCIAL CAPITAL) FOLLOWING BOMBING INCIDENT IN WHICH ONE PERSON KILLED AND THREE INJURED. OCCASIONAL ASSASSINATIONS OF PRO-GOVERNMENT CADRES HAS CONTINUED AT VERY LOW-LEVEL. MAJOR TRANSPORT ARTERIES HAVE BEEN SAFE AND NOT SUBJECT TO INSURGENT ATTACKS.

C. SHOA - INSURGENT ACTIVITY HAS INCREASED IN

NORTHERN SHOA DISTRICTS OF MENZ-GISHE AND MERHABETE.
REMNANTS OF BIRU BROTHERS (EXTREMELY ACTIVE ANTI-
GOVERNMENT LEADERS WHO WERE CAPTURED AND KILLED IN 1975)
APPEAR TO HAVE REINVIGORATED FORMER GROUP, AND ACCORDING
TO RELIABLE SOURCE, CONTROL LARGE PORTIONS OF DISTRICTS.
EPMG HAS ATTEMPTED SEVERAL TIMES TO ELIMINATE INSURGENTS,
VARIOUSLY ESTIMATED AT 1,000-1,200 WELL-ARMED AND WELL-
TRAINED MEN, WITH LITTLE SUCCESS. U.S. MISSIONARIES,
LONG-RESIDENT IN TWO DISTRICTS, HAVE BEEN FORCED TO LEAVE
THEIR STATIONS BECAUSE OF DANGER INHERENT IN BEING
CAUGHT IN EPMG-INSURGENT CROSSFIRE, AND OF SOME EPMG
PRESSURE TO REMOVE NON-ETHIOPIAN OBSERVERS FROM AREA.
SIGA MEDA MILITIA TRAINING CAMP 25 KMS WEST OF ADDIS
HAS NOT CAUSED ANY MAJOR SECURITY PROBLEM FOR EPMG.
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SCHOOL SITUATIONS IN SOUTHWEST OF PROVINCE, ONCE
UNSETTLED, NOW HAS BEEN NORMALIZED SIMILAR TO WOLLO.
TRAVEL ALONG ALL MAJOR ROADS HAS BEEN SAFE, WITH NO PAR-
TICULAR SECURITY PRECAUTIONS.

2. COMMENTS TO FOLLOW BY SEPTTEL.
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